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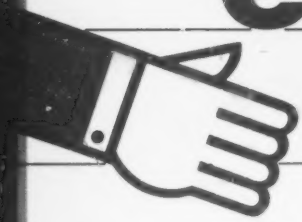

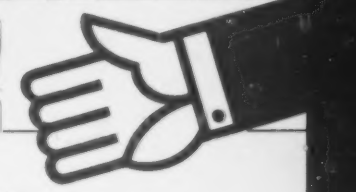

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SALES & MARKETING MANAGEMENT

COVER BY GREG RAGLAND

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ABP BPA

THE RACE

EDITOR, HEAL THYSELF!

This month's cover story on customer service makes note of the fact that more and more companies are recognizing the importance of this facet of marketing as it relates to profitability and growth; and in line with practicing what we preach, we've decided it's time we did a little revamping of our own customer service strategy here at *S&MM*.

It wasn't all that long ago that anyone wanting to contact this magazine picked up a phone and dialed the number of our editorial offices. In most cases, they were immediately connected to the Reader Inquiry Department, had their request filled, and went away happy—or at least satisfied that their call had been dealt with personally and professionally.

Then came specialization—and, more recently, voice mail.

Granted, both of these concepts work just fine for some businesses. In fact, voice mail and other automated call-routing systems—when properly administered—are extremely useful in freeing people from the disorganization and interruptions that telephones often create. Similarly, specialization of certain job functions has done a lot to streamline the sales and marketing process. It's just that in our case it hasn't worked out that way, and I doubt that we're all that unique in this respect.

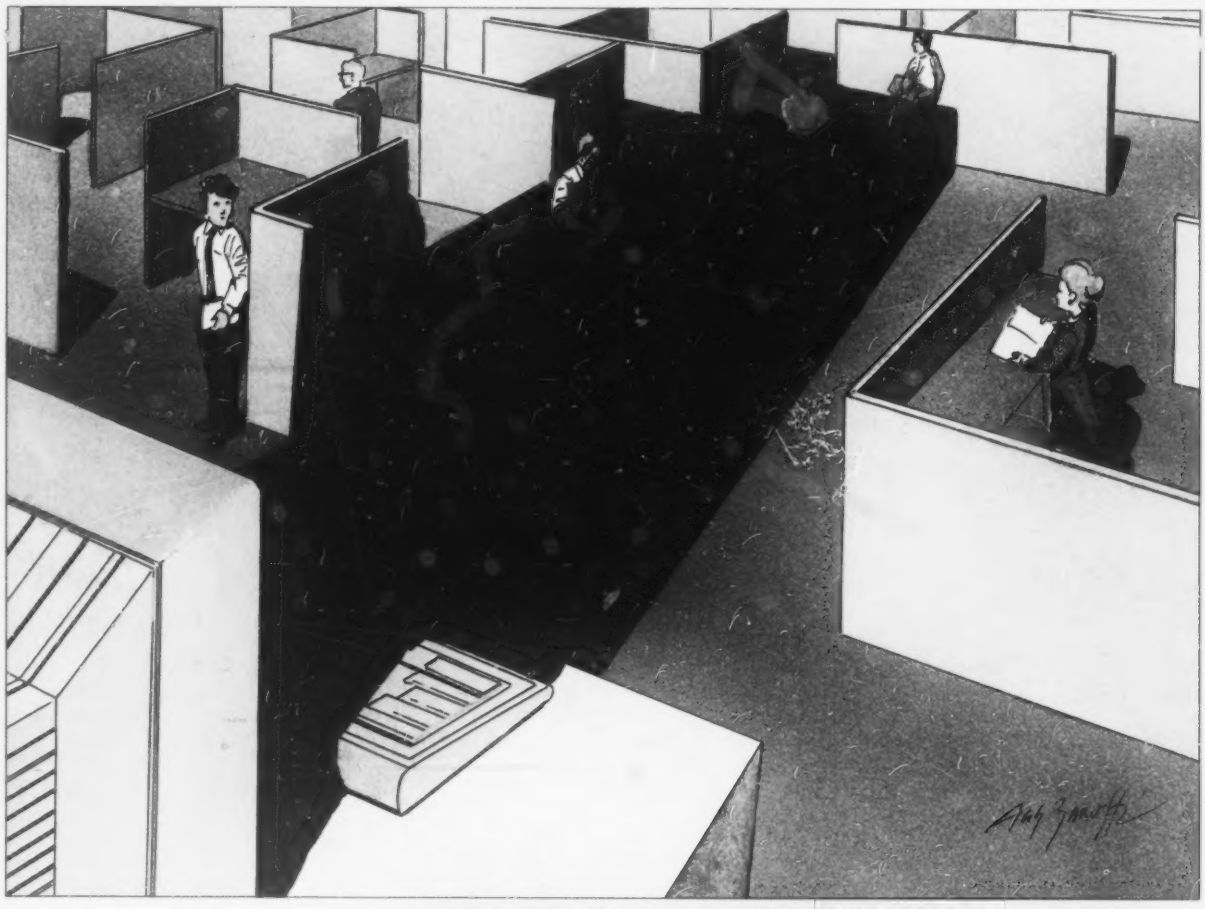
For example, our masthead currently lists no fewer than eight different phone numbers people can call when they have a particular problem or request. In theory, this should make it simpler for readers to get what they need quickly, directly, and with a minimum of transferring. The problem is, if your request doesn't happen to fit one of these specific categories (lord knows how many we'd end up with if we tried to list them all), you're pretty much out of luck.

And then there's voice mail. Personally, I'm not one of its most ardent fans, although there are those who believe it's one of the great technological advancements of the modern age. My experience, on the other hand, is that a customer who calls four different numbers and talks to four different machines before reaching a live body isn't going to be all that impressed with your investment in hi-tech hardware.

Anyway, what I've finally realized is that the system we're currently using isn't designed to make things easier for our customers—it's designed to make things easier for us. Unfortunately, we didn't discover this on our own. Our customers had to tell us. And given some of the heated exchanges I've had with them lately, it's a wonder the phone system hasn't melted—voice mail and all.

Our solution? A return to basics: 1) hire a customer service manager; 2) eliminate our convoluted system of phone numbers; and 3) relegate voice mail to its proper role as a support function. In other words, specialization and automation are out; consolidation and personalization are in. Hardly what you'd call a bold and innovative move, but if it means we'll be able to keep conflict and controversy where they belong—in the pages of this magazine—and out of the customer service department, that's bold and innovative enough for me.

Richard P. Kern
Editor



ANDREA BARUFFI

FROM SELLING AID TO TASKMASTER

While users are happy with the computer's benefits in sales, they're discovering that increased selling time may be a myth.

BY THAYER C. TAYLOR, SENIOR EDITOR

A subtle shift is under way among the driving forces behind the computerization of the selling function.

Traditionally, desktop personal computers (PCs) were seen as a helpful tool for salespeople, one that would make them more productive through better organization of their time, planning, and activities. And while that goal is still critical, it's increasingly being folded into a broader perspective that views the PC as an instrument for supporting and reinforcing a company's overall marketing strategy.

This vital transition is triggered by two catalysts: 1) better, closer, partnership-type customer relations, which many see as the primary marketing theme of the nineties; and 2) the improved versatility of laptop PCs that, combined with telecommunications, hold the promise of changing the nature of the salesperson's job. However, investing sales computerization with a broader role may become a deadly minefield if marketers forget that the primary focus must be on what helps the salesperson perform *more productively.*

Confirmation of this is found in *Computer-Based Sales Force Support,* a recent report on computerization in sales published by the Conference Board, a New York City-based business research organization. The report is a follow-up to a similar survey the Conference Board (CB) conducted in 1986. Among the new report's key findings (based on responses from 285 sales/marketing executives from companies with median annual sales of $230 million):

Keeping Your Computer System on the Right Track

Based on interviews with several respondents to the Conference Board's survey, Louis A. Wallis, program director and author of the report *Computer-Based Sales Force Support*, has some pointers on how to structure a successful computerized sales support (CSS) system. According to Wallis, in order to anticipate and debunk some better-known myths, the following needs should be examined in the hard light of reality:

- **Purpose.** "Don't expect a new CSS system to succeed if it must overlay a problem-ridden sales organization. Fix your problems first."
- **Goals.** "Don't set system goals by what was important in the past or goals of other companies. Determine your real objectives."
- **Productivity.** "Ripple effects of sales force productivity can spread benefits around; an improvement anywhere in this chain boosts organization performance. For example, direct marketing efforts become more productive because field salespeople spend more time collecting and entering accurate information about prospects and customers on their computers."
- **Training.** "Don't try to save money by skimping on training. It's false economy to spend thousands of dollars on hardware and software and then neglect training, which strongly shapes users' attitudes and their willingness to learn and use the system. Users make or break systems no matter how soundly the systems are designed."
- **Software.** "If you have to get the new CSS system up and running quickly, the best bet is to buy software for the entire system rather than develop it in-house."
- **Task forces.** "Get the sales force thoroughly involved in setting performance goals, and be sure the system accommodates the way they do their jobs. To help assure user acceptance, get human resources and training people involved early on."
- **Costs.** "Be prepared for higher-than-budgeted costs. Active field usage may cause greater than expected wear and tear."
- **Prices.** "Don't expect system prices to fall significantly. While price-performance ratios for computer systems have dramatically improved, high performance doesn't come cheap—and a 'plain vanilla' system may not suit your needs."
- **Changes.** "Expect to make changes. Half the companies surveyed experienced 'serious' shortcomings with CSS at one time or another. If the CSS system doesn't change through extended use, it probably isn't responding to your business."
- **Payoff.** "Expect CSS payoff in 'hard' and 'soft' dollars within two years. In about a year, it should be clear where the system's heading, and at least some early gains should be apparent."

■ **Management of the sales force** is the single most important benefit resulting from computerized sales support (CSS) systems, followed closely by productivity, access to data, and faster response to customers.

■ **Sales force productivity,** particularly when it comes to measurement, is now recognized as much more complex than the simplistic "two more calls per week" yardstick.

■ **Increased selling time** is overrated as a systems goal.

■ **Although selling is becoming an information-affluent function,** companies are divided over how much of an information-gatherer the salesperson should be.

Indicative of what has become a bandwagon rush into sales force computerization, half the survey's respondents said they either had operational systems in place, were pilot testing them, or were in the planning phase—almost double the 25% reported in the 1986 study.

Plummeting computer costs, coupled with steadily rising selling costs, are the driving forces behind this change. The table below graphically illustrates how these two factors—moving in opposite directions—have affected the trend toward CSS:

	1986	1990	% CHANGE
MIPS* cost	$5,270	$1,000	–82%
Cost per call	$ 153	$ 228	+49%

*Million instructions per second
SOURCE: Gartner Group (MIPS cost); *S&MM* (cost per call).

In addition, dramatic improvements in PCs themselves have also helped drive automation. As Ron Glassner, CEO of Data One, a Moline, Ill.-based sales information systems specialist, notes: "Laptops became relevant to the market only recently. Companies had very limited choices in 1986 because laptops were just beginning to become viable."

And indications are that marketers who have moved into CSS believe they took the right step. "Companies with operational CSS report considerable success in reaching system objectives," the CB study states. "The median achievement level was seventy-five percent." Behind this high figure, says Howard Anderson, head of the Yankee Group, a Boston-based hi-tech research firm, "is the awareness that the equation works: Computerization in sales improves productivity. There isn't a single member of the Yankee Group 100—the largest computer users—who haven't automated a significant portion of their sales force."

Still another reason may be that CSS benefits tally with goals marketers had in mind from the outset. Boosting sales force productivity and effectiveness were the predominant CSS objectives, the report states, adding that "four major fields emerge as a nucleus for all other CSS functions: 1) productivity; 2) information; 3) customer support; and 4) communications."

MANAGING THE SALES FORCE

The "single most important benefit" cited in the report, however, is managing the sales force (which includes control and feedback), with better sales

To Make or Buy: The Software Choice

When the Conference Board first surveyed computerization in sales back in 1986, most respondents were developing their software in-house. However, the increasing availability of commercial sales software has tilted the scales toward the purchase of outside programs. As *S&MM*'s "Directory of PC-Based Sales and Marketing Applications Software" (December 1990) shows, the number of such packages has exploded 389%—from 140 in 1986 to 685 in 1990.

Other factors have encouraged the trend toward purchasing commercial packages. As the Conference Board report notes: "1) Capabilities of software vendors have grown along with their experience in serving different clients. 2) There continues to be a shakeout of system vendors, which leaves a remaining core of well-established and financially sound suppliers. 3) Internal information systems departments' continuing backlog of work, high development costs, and long lead times discount the virtue of self-sufficient corporate information systems."

The report also includes some thoughtful advice about so-called "cheap" single-function sales software: "The small software packages weren't usually taken seriously, but they have grown in usefulness and capability. While their performance cannot equal that of full-fledged, multifeatured systems, these PC programs can, in some cases, give a feel for what is possible, and even satisfy some simple requirements."

performance and productivity, access to data, and faster response to customers all vying for second place. In fact, faster customer response is an unexpected boon, since it wasn't a major CSS objective when the systems were designed.

Be aware, however, that pinpointing CSS benefits can be tricky. For example, such benefits as "professionalism" of the sales force, higher sales, creating a competitive advantage, and providing more selling time—often assumed to be natural offshoots of computerization—"ranked very low as realized benefits for reasons [that are] not clear," the report says.

Another favorite among computer enthusiasts—competitive advantage—ranks next to the bottom among CSS benefits. Others have also noted this phenomenon. "CEOs of most companies are hard put to cite even a single example of having achieved more than a short-lived advantage from their investments in information technology (IT)," contends John Cecil, a principal at McKinsey & Co., a New York City-based management consultant, and co-leader of the firm's IT practice. "After a decade of 'strategic' investments, few CEOs invest in IT to achieve sustainable advantage. Most view IT only as a necessity to remain competitive."

The Conference Board report, however, disputes this contention, despite evidence to the contrary supplied by a number of survey respondents: "Companies that pioneered these systems now have five to ten years' experience—a lead that can't be easily eliminated by a competitive system coming on-line. Perhaps more important is growing acceptance of the belief that competitive vigor comes from the same place it always has: satisfied customers."

The report goes on to say that "certain goals of marketing success seem to transcend simply adopting CSS in pursuit of competitive advantage in the abstract, notably the solid goal of building higher-quality, longer-lasting customer relationships. The sales system that enhances that effort is on the right track, and these company-specific efforts may be much harder for a competitor to emulate than simply using a certain kind of CSS."

SALES FORCE PRODUCTIVITY

Among other things, CSS is forcing marketers to take a more sophisticated approach to sales productivity. As one marketing executive puts it: "Classical measures of productivity—such as sales per employee or time to pro-

Where CSS Stands Today...and Tomorrow

APPLICATION	CURRENTLY USED IN: MFG.	CURRENTLY USED IN: SERVICES	PLANNED USE IN: MFG.	PLANNED USE IN: SERVICES
Analyzing customer needs	73%	60%	16%	24%
Budgeting	46	43	18	13
Checking inventory	51	9	23	**
Checking orders	64	34	22	9
Communications/E-mail	66	57	24	11
Competitive intelligence	22	20	27	24
Customer account management	66	60	22	26
Database activity	63	71	26	15
Entering orders	52	37	*	17
Forecasting	55	43	24	7
Graphics	40	37	18	17
Preparing presentations	45	66	22	17
Preparing proposals	43	69	**	**
Pricing	46	54	15	15
Product information	40	49	22	15
Prospecting	26	49	16	24
Reporting expenses	30	20	24	15
Reporting sales calls	42	43	21	19
Spreadsheets	54	40	15	13
Time management/scheduling	31	26	24	22
Word processing	62	57	14	15

*Combined with "checking orders." **Not included.
SOURCE: The Conference Board, *Computer-Based Sales Force Support*, Report #953.

cess an order—fall short of effective measurement because they fail to assess the full value of the output. For example, with CSS a customer who learns an item is out of stock can immediately select an alternative."

Changes in the sales process, along with the trend to recast the salesperson as a business manager, invest sales force productivity with broader dimensions. "The concept of productivity must include the entire sales and marketing organization," states the CB report, "since their elements are increasingly intertwined and integrated.

"Also worth examining is whether circumstances have altered sales tasks: whether CSS has created new opportunities for analysis and strategy formulation that may increase, rather than reduce, work for salespeople. This may become a plus to marketing and, if achieved, contribute benefits as valuable as productivity gains for the sales force."

The popular assumption that there's a direct relationship between selling time and productivity also comes under fire in the report: "With increasing use of CSS, it's possible the sales force may spend more time in the office instead of less," the report says. "At one consumer products company, salespeople used to spend half a day a week in the office, working on reports and customer accounts; now they spend a whole day. This, explains the company's marketing executive, is 'partly because of new demands we made to get information we need. Everybody has to participate, or [the system] doesn't work.'"

As a result, CSS *can* boost an organization's productivity—but at the salesperson's expense. "Originally, we wanted the system to provide salespeople more selling time with the customer," an oil company executive is cited as saying, "but it has added some administrative load because associated support people were eliminated. So, the CSS had a different kind of impact from what we planned. Sales reps have had to shoulder more work, and they realize this. Productivity of the whole system probably grows, but maybe not that of the salesperson."

Naturally, downgrading the salesperson as the focal point of CSS could be a potential source of future morale problems. Warns James Leavey, president of Snap Software in Manchester, N.H.: "Any system that doesn't focus on helping the salesperson achieve more won't have long-term success. Salespeople are very aware of whether the system is designed to help them, and if they feel it isn't, they'll leave the company."

INFORMATION AFFLUENCE

If the PC is touted as a tool to help the salesperson, it's also making him a conduit for information, both as a gatherer and receiver. A radically altered marketing environment, where buyers have "information parity" with sellers, will only accelerate this trend.

"Salespeople must have powerful tools to work effectively with 'information-affluent' customers," the report stresses. "Information provided by the supplier no longer gets automatic acceptance; it's subject to discussion, interpretation, and validation."

One manager whose sales force calls on retail stores notes that his firm is "concentrating on quality and service, getting away from mundane information. We're now reporting only customer-oriented information. We'll have very few canned reports, and they're not designed to check up on people but rather to spot trends and help customers see that we can provide a 'value added.' We'll be totally customer-oriented."

Still, some fear that information tasks will hinder, not help, the salesperson's basic mission. "We want to get beyond the 'sales system' and focus on customer results," one marketer told the Board. "People in my company want to automate call and expense reporting, but I'm not interested in that. You're just imposing data-entry chores on the field, not improving selling. Building sales is the key, not just getting information back to headquarters so people can analyze it."

That kind of thinking, says Data One's Glassner, overlooks the fact that "salespeople out in the trenches are listening to what end users say about their product. That's the best information you can have when preparing to attack a market."

One of the more remarkable changes wrought by PCs is the mesmerizing effect they've had on traditional payback attitudes. When the first managers introduced PCs into sales, they had to defend their pioneering with a strong dollars-and-cents argument. Today, computerization is an act of faith. A typical viewpoint, the report says, is, "You just have to believe that [productivity benefits] are going to happen, and avoid spending a large amount of time and effort documenting it. Get the results first." Echoes another executive: "Our goal was to give field personnel a tool to help them make better presentations, supply

Where CSS Systems Help Most

SALES ACTIVITY	"IMPROVED" AND "SIGNIFICANTLY" IMPROVED	CONTRIBUTED MOST "TO SALES OR SELLING"
Customer account management	66%	32%
Communications with the field	63	28
Sales force productivity	59	36
"Professionalism" of sales force	57	14
Customer satisfaction	46	19
Sales volume	43	12
After-sale support	41	7
Customer presentations	41	17
Preparing proposals	40	20
Budgeting, goal-setting	37	10
Order-shipment cycle	37	13
Available (more) selling time	35	10
Call reporting	27	7
Configuring products	25	7
Coordinating account teams	22	*
Prospecting	22	7
Reporting-controlling expenses	21	3
Sales calls per week	21	4
Competitive intelligence	20	2
Closing the sale	18	7
Reducing sales costs	18	2
Reducing errors	12	3

*Not included.
SOURCE: The Conference Board; *Computer-Based Sales Force Support, Report #953.*

Most Important Benefits from Computerization

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Better control, management feedback	16%
Access to data	14
Better sales performance, productivity	14
Faster responses to customers	14
Better communications	13
Timely information	11
Accurate information	10
Professionalism of sales force	8
On-the-spot results	6
Ease of use	4
Higher sales	4
Competitive advantage	3
More selling time	2
Precise customer targeting	2

SOURCE: The Conference Board; *Computer-Based Sales Force Support*, Report #953

more information, be more helpful to the customer. We weren't looking for a hard dollar payback."

HARD + SOFT = CSS PAYBACK

Current economic conditions may yet influence payback attitudes, and it's worth noting that the Conference Board survey was conducted when the economy was growing. Ralph T. Linsalata, president of Envoy Systems, a sales information systems specialist in Waltham, Mass., notes that "since the recession began, we've had to spend a lot of time building cost-justification models as a result of client pressure to identify cost savings."

Still, the CB report concludes that marketers tend to rely on a combination of "hard" and "soft" benefits: "Desirable results such as customer satisfaction, better sales force morale, and more productive plans are normally accepted as benefits, despite their hard-to-quantify nature. Desirable CSS goals that are hard to quantify are called 'soft' goals, pursued in the belief that 'hard' results—increased sales and profits—will follow."

At least one marketer, General Foods USA of White Plains, N.Y., relies on a blend of the two. When GF designed its own CSS system—called Force 90—a key objective was to slash by 20% the 15 to 30 hours sales reps devoted to weekly administrative chores, thus increasing their selling time. The Force 90 task force spotlighted 15 major areas for improvement, the top three being call reporting, trade deals, and communications.

The benefits from Force 90: "Hard savings have resulted from lowering communication costs (phone, postage, mailing, copier)," notes the report, "and numerous soft savings have surfaced. Salespeople have a higher level of confidence in their information, as well as a greater sense of professionalism. They make more presentations and business reviews, do work that wasn't done before, and feel better about the decisions they make."

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THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MARKET: COMMUNITY, GROWTH, AND CHANGE

Understanding their dimension, dynamics, and diversity is the key to successfully targeting America's black consumers.

FPG INTERNATIONAL/RON CHAPPLE

BY MELISSA CAMPANELLI, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The 31,028,100 African-Americans who make up just over 12% of the U.S. population may seem like a rather small segment compared to other high-profile markets like baby boomers (80 million) and seniors (nearly 53 million). On the other hand, the fact that this group has grown by 14.4% between 1980 and 1989 (while the population as a whole increased only 9.2%) makes the African-American market—which spends over $170 *billion* a year on goods and services nationwide—a segment that marketers should certainly become familiar with if they aren't already.

According to Ken Smikle, editor and publisher of the Chicago-based *Target Market News*, a national trade publication that covers the African-American market, "With the introduction of more and more products specifically geared to the black community, it's clear that marketers recognize the potential and growing importance of

this segment of the population."

Geographically speaking, America's large and diverse black population is relatively easy to target, since most African-Americans reside in major metropolitan areas. In fact, studies reveal that fully 55% of the black population lives in cities, with an additional 26% residing in suburban areas and the remaining 19% located in rural areas.

A quick scan of the county outline map (page 78) reaffirms this fact: the largest number of blacks tend to be located in the most densely populated metropolitan areas, most notably Chicago, Los Angeles, and major cities located along the Northeast and Southeast coasts.

Metro areas in the South Central states, however, usually have the highest *concentrations* of African-Americans. Memphis, Tenn., for instance, has the highest percentage of black population of any major metro in the country—41.8%, fully 30% above the average U.S. ratio of 12.4%. Other metros with high percentages of blacks are New Orleans, La. (33.5%), Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, Va. (28.6%), and Washington, D.C. (27.1%).

AFFLUENT AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Once you know where the black population is located, the next step involves zeroing in on the heaviest concentrations of African-American "buying power" within those areas. A study prepared by William O'Hare of the Population Reference Bureau for *American Demographics* magazine found that half of all affluent black households (defined as those with combined incomes of $50,000 or more) are located in the South, 23% are found in the West, and an additional 40% are spread between the Northeast and Midwest.

The study also found that the Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., metro area ranks first in the nation in terms of black affluence—with 16% of black households there falling under the affluent banner. Following closely behind were Washington, D.C. (13.5%), Gary, Ind. (13%), Detroit, Mich. (11%), and Chicago, Ill. (10.5%).

Unlike other segments, this affluence comes mainly from hard work—9 out of 10 affluent blacks earn their income from wages and salaries alone—even though affluent black households tend to have lower *net* incomes, since they're normally younger than other affluent households and rarely own their own homes.

Affluence isn't all that common within black communities in general, however, with only 14% of all black households—roughly 2 million—earning in excess of $50,000. In addition, according to data from the Dept. of Commerce, even though the real median income of black households *rose* 5.1% between 1988 and 1989—from $17,200 to $18,080—it's still 63% *lower* than the real median income of all U.S. households, which currently stands at $28,910. What's more, the report shows that incomes of 9.3 million blacks—or 31% of the entire African-American population—fell below the poverty line in 1989, compared to 26.2% of Hispanics, 14.1% of Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 10% of whites.

Nonetheless, the black population has shown marked improvement in several areas over the course of the last decade—a clear indication that more positive changes are in store for the future.

The school dropout rate, for instance, is at an all-time low. In fact,

Do the Right Thing: Marketing in the Inner City

Part of a marketer's job is to target a specific segment of the population and find out exactly what kinds of goods and services that segment buys. Why then does marketing and advertising products to inner-city African-Americans frequently stir up controversey?

For the answer to that question, we thought we'd take a look at some of the problems marketers have to deal with when targeting this segment.

Along with other black activists, Dr. Louis Sullivan, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, protested against—and ultimately curtailed—the production of Uptown, a brand of cigarette that R.J. Reynolds had targeted directly to African-Americans. Sullivan claimed that "Uptown's message is more disease, more suffering, and more death for a group [blacks] already bearing more than its share of smoking-related illness and suffering."

The Rev. Calvin Butts of Harlem's Abyssian Baptist Church in New York City has organized a neighborhood crusade of concerned black citizens and activists that is against the advertising of potentially harmful products, such as alcohol and tobacco. He and his followers have been spotted whitewashing billboards that depict these products, and the group has picketed the headquarters of Phillip Morris, the largest cigarette maker in the country.

Marketing any product with the potential for abuse to anyone—let alone to a segment with large concentrations in the inner city—is an ethical question marketers and manufacturers have been grappling with for decades. Within the inner-city African-American community itself, however, this struggle has implications that are infinitely more far-reaching and controversial.

For example, a recent study by the Department of Health and Human Services—"Alcohol & Health"—notes that "although alcohol consumption levels are very similar for both black and white men, black men experience considerably higher rates of all kinds of social and health complications than white men, and high problem rates are concentrated among the more socioeconomically disadvantaged men."

The study's findings also suggest that "the higher vulnerability of blacks to alcohol problems compared with whites at the same consumption level may be largely a reflection of social and economic problems such as unemployment, adverse living conditions, poor health care, and racial discrimination."

Similar studies regarding tobacco and smoking-related ailments have also linked disease and inadequate health care. Still, these complaints don't always center on products

with such high potential for abuse. Certain foods are also viewed as possible vices, especially those high in fat—such as processed meats and fast foods—which tend to be more popular in inner-city neighborhoods because of limited shopping choices and lower incomes.

Any savvy marketer who does his or her homework when planning a marketing campaign should be aware that research studies such as Mediamark Research's 1990 Doublebase Report consistently show that African-Americans are *indisputably* more likely than any other group of adults to purchase such products as malt liquor, cognac, brandy, sangria, gin, scotch, port wine, cigarettes, cigars, chewing and smokeless tobacco, sausage, and ham. Given this, what should these marketers do when faced with the data that show the marketability of their products but who find themselves repeatedly chastised for actually bringing those products to market?

One answer is to become involved in the community by sponsoring events or underwriting cultural activities that educate and enlighten those blacks living within the inner city. Some tobacco companies, for instance, underwrite the annual Harlem Week festival in New York City, and G. Heileman Brewing Co., which makes Colt 45 malt liquor, donates 10¢ for every case of its product sold during February—Black History Month—to the United Negro College Fund.

And while some might say that this doesn't go far enough in addressing the basic issue—the effect these products have on the market itself—sponsorships and scholarships still provide the inner-city African-American community with much-needed programs and support. Also, inner-city newspapers and magazines—many of them black-owned businesses—benefit from the revenues that related product advertising provides.

Activists believe that other manufacturers—such as makers of baby- and/or personal-care products—could also make a substantial contribution to the health and welfare of the African-American community, and the door is open for any company with the commitment and conscience to do just that. As for more controversial products, analysts say that the only sure way inner-city communities have of discouraging the marketing of tobacco and liquor products is for their residents to stop buying them, although such a message isn't all that easy to convey, given the continued popularity these products enjoy. Consequently, until a way is found for activists and advertisers to find some middle ground where the interests of both groups can be served, this controversy will surely continue.

from 1980 to 1988, the rate of young blacks completing high school rose from 75% to 80%, and the number who have completed college virtually doubled, climbing from 1.1 million in 1980 to 2.1 million in 1988.

Blacks are also moving into better-paying jobs. About half are now in higher-salaried categories (white-collar and precision crafts), compared with 70% of whites. Also, the number of black-owned businesses has more than doubled, and the number of black elected officials soared from 1,469 in 1970 to 7,226 in 1989.

PURCHASING POWER

Industry studies and statistics indicate that there's a growing black upper middle class out there, and as you might expect, this group spends a large share of its discretionary income on the same kinds of luxury items purchased by any red-blooded, American Express Card-carrying member of this particular income group: foreign cars, expensive apparel, hi-tech stereo equipment, personal computers; all the accessories and accoutrements that have come to be identified with upscale and urbane yuppies—or in this case buppies.

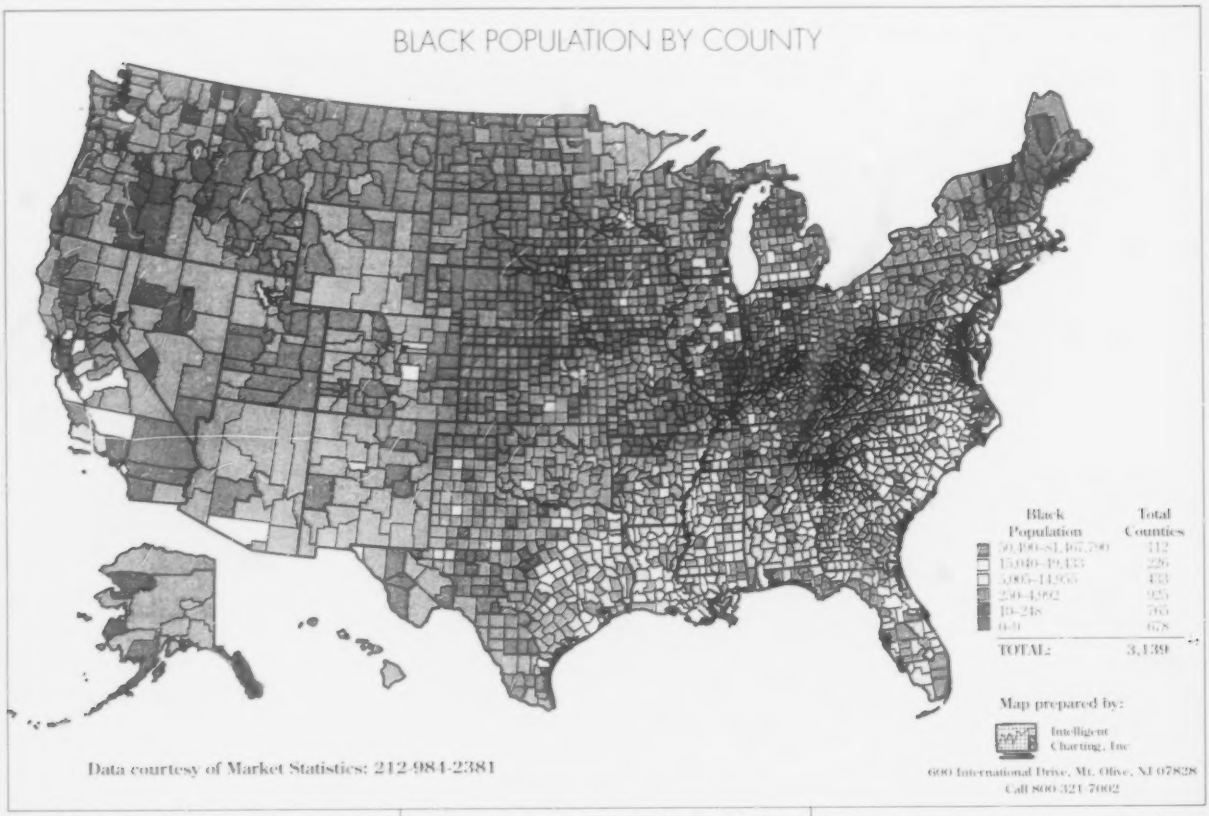
Claritas Corp., the Alexandria Va.-based market research company, recently studied blacks whom they consider solidly entrenched in the middle class (over 50% of their group had household incomes of over $35,000) and found that, among other things, this group spends heavily on dress suits, overcoats, and slacks, and are more likely than the average person to have an American Express Card and a satellite dish. They're also far more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes and drink scotch (see sidebar, at left), although as we'll see, these two product categories are just as popular with blacks in other income groups as well.

According to the 1990 Doublebase Report by the N.Y.-based marketing research firm Mediamark Research, Inc. (MRI), which surveyed 3,868 black adults selected from a broad spectrum of income groups nationwide, blacks with incomes of $20,000 to $34,999 are just as likely to spend large amounts of their disposable dollars on cognac, baby products, and certain personal care products—such as toothpaste and hair conditioning treatments—as blacks in the upper income strata.

However, these aren't the only products black Americans are interested in. Figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 1989 *Consumer Expenditure Survey* show that black household units in general index above the U.S. average in numerous product categories—everything from natural gas consumption to the purchase of fruits and vegetables.

For example, the Black Consumer Spending Index (BCSI) table on page 80 shows that black households are 7% more likely to spend money on food products than any other segment. Some specific categories worth noting: nonalcoholic beverages (including soft drinks), where blacks index at 4% above the national average; cereals and bakery products (+7%); fruits and vegetables (+20%); sugar and other sweets (+27%); and meats, poultry, fish, and eggs, where blacks index at 62% above the norm.

Black households are also 99% more likely to spend their discretionary income on rented apartment dwellings than all U.S. households



combined, due largely to the fact that many black households are located in central cities and inner cities where apartment living is more common, a factor that in turn may contribute to higher-than-average public utility and public transportation index figures for blacks.

Also, even though the Index shows that black households tend to purchase fewer new automobiles than any other group, a study by Impact Resources Inc. of Columbus, Ohio, and Deloitte & Touche of New York City found that when blacks *do* buy cars, they're nearly twice as likely to buy an expensive foreign model—such as an Audi, BMW, or Mercedes.

It's also important to note that while the BCSI shows relatively low figures for a category such as alcohol, industry studies show that certain types of alcohol—such as malt liquor, cognac, and low alcohol beer—index high within the black population. MRI's study found, for example, that, with an index figure of 529, black adults are more than five times more likely to purchase malt liquor than any other group.

And while food away from home didn't rank very high on the BCSI, the Impact Resources report found that, in spite of the fact that blacks patronize restaurants less often than other consumers, when they *do* dine out, they prefer fast-food restaurants like Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's.

A FEEL FOR THE MARKET

Selling to the African-American market is very different from selling to the general market—or any other market, for that matter—and in order to be successful, it's important that marketers understand what makes this segment tick.

In most cases, says Pepper Miller, president of P. Hunter & Assoc., a Chicago-based research company that targets the black consumer market, "blacks have a different purchasing dynamic than whites. The factors that go into the black community's purchasing decisions tend to be more traditionally-, culturally-, and emotionally-based than whites'. [These patterns] seem to be tied to a [black] person's value system."

Miller also notes that African-Americans in general yearn for a sense of acceptance and belonging, and are therefore very image-conscious. In line with this, focus groups also show that blacks want to be portrayed as healthy people in integrated settings; i.e., they want to be accepted by mainstream society, not singled out.

Naturally, advertising campaigns that play on these types of roles—a harmonious community atmosphere, integrated settings, authentic family-oriented groups, upscale environments—and that show products that are intended for *them*, not just the general market, tend to be accepted more readily by blacks.

One company that seems to have a handle on this formula is the Colorado-based Adolph Coors Brewing Co. One of its recent television spots depicts a multicultural group—blacks and whites—turning a run-down building into a community center and, naturally, relaxing with a Coors afterward.

"We wanted to position Coors as a beer that recognizes the hard-working culture of American blacks," states Valerie Graves, senior vice president and creative director at UniWorld/New York, Coors's agency for this campaign. "With the ad, we hope to depict an understanding of the cultural and community side of black America."

But while the Coors ad tries hard to break down negative black stereotypes—something that other companies are also working to do—most advertisers still need to be persuaded to depict minority groups in a uniformly positive light.

Another company that's trying to emphasize the positive aspect of the black community through its products

and advertising is Mattel, the Los Angeles-based toy manufacturer.

Before setting out to create an entire line of new black dolls, Mattel executives conducted focus groups with black mothers and their daughters to see how the toy company could improve upon the already popular black version of Barbie.

"We found that although the black Barbie doll was popular among blacks, there was a certain diversity [that was] lacking," says Donna Gibbs, director of media relations for Mattel, adding that "blacks wanted a doll that more accurately reflected the black community."

Hence, the Shani doll. According to Mattel, Shani "realistically reflects the natural beauty of the African-American woman," which means that Shani—along with other dolls in the line—has different skin tones, hair styles, and fashions, all designed to reflect the ethnic diversity of blacks in general. This way, says Gibbs, the dolls become individuals, conveying positive role models for a culture that's extremely conscious of negative stereotypes.

Another type of marketing that emphasizes positive reinforcement is what Sylvia Dabney, director of ethnic marketing at McDonald's, calls "community marketing."

"The premise here," Dabney notes, "is to put something back into the communities where we do our business. This approach builds a relationship within the black community and shows that we're supporting them."

To this end, McDonald's has worked with the A Better Chance Foundation, offering college preparatory school scholarships to black students in underprivileged areas. A similar approach is taken by the company's Black History Makers of the Future program, which highlights 30 African-American children. These children, who McDonald's feels will be among the leaders of tomorrow, aren't merely recognized, they're also included in the company's national TV ads.

Along with Coors, Mattel, and McDonald's, other marketers that have chosen to emphasize the successes of African-Americans are Toyota, which donates 16 scholarships a year to the American Negro College Fund, and Kraft/General Foods, which supports expanded school and summer meal programs in inner cities.

THE AGENCY CONNECTION

For most of these companies and others, the key to tapping into the African-American market has been through their use of black advertising agencies. Ken Smikle, who formed the African-American Marketing and Media Assn. (AAMMA), hopes that increased use of black-run agencies will help eliminate stereotyping and build business for its members. "It just makes good marketing sense," notes Smikle, "to involve black marketing and media agencies when directing campaigns toward the black community. In order to sell up to any specific ethnic group's expectations, there's a need to be culturally correct and sensitive to certain issues. Involving black media professionals shows a client how to establish a positive long-term relationship with its black consumer base."

Some companies, however, are sticking with the ad agency they're already using for other product lines. Mattel, for instance, is using Ogilvy & Mather, a New York City-based general market agency, for its new line of black dolls, primarily because this agency has been handling their Barbie line for years. Ogilvy does, however, have many blacks involved in the project and has hired an ethnic specialist to consult on everything involved in the line—from authenticity to ethnicity.

Still another reason to use African-Americans in the marketing process is that there are distinct differences in the ways blacks perceive ads. According to Pepper Miller, in order to effectively communicate to African-Americans, it's important to know that, in general, blacks are more literal than whites in their response to ad copy: They respond to copy and visuals that correspond *exactly*. Miller also notes that blacks have strong *brand* loyalties, although studies have shown that, as a group, they show relatively little loyalty in their preference of a particular store or chain.

It's also worth noting here that while these concepts deal in general terms with marketing to African-Americans, blacks are basically a multifaceted group. Therefore, this diversity should always be kept in mind—along with the type of product you're marketing—when deciding where to advertise and what media channels to utilize.

"The notion that there's one sin-

Major Metros with the Highest Percentage of Black Population

RANK	METRO	BLACK POPULATION %	BLACK POPULATION TOTAL*
1.	Memphis, TN	41.8%	411.8
2.	New Orleans, LA	33.5	438.9
3.	Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA	28.6	394.4
4.	Washington, DC	27.1	1,023.9
5.	New York, NY	26.3	2,265.2
6.	Baltimore, MD	26.1	621.8
7.	Newark, NJ	24.3	460.6
8.	Chicago, IL	23.8	1,477.1
9.	Atlanta, GA	23.4	660.4
10.	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	21.7	244.3
11.	Detroit, MI	20.9	919.0
12.	Miami-Hialeah, FL	20.7	389.6
13.	Houston, TX	19.9	645.5
14.	Philadelphia, PA	19.5	964.6
14.	Cleveland, OH	19.5	359.2
15.	St. Louis, MO	17.1	426.0
16.	Dallas, TX	16.8	417.4
17.	Nashville, TN	16.5	162.8
18.	Oakland, CA	16.4	335.7
19.	Indianapolis, IN	14.7	185.0
20.	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	13.4	1,179.2
21.	Orlando, FL	13.2	137.7
22.	Cincinnati, OH	12.8	185.9
22.	Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood-Pompano Beach, FL	12.8	160.4
23.	Kansas City, MO-KS	12.6	199.4
24.	Milwaukee, WI	12.0	168.0
25.	Columbus, OH	11.8	159.1
	U.S. TOTAL	**12.4%**	**31,028.1**

*Figures shown in thousands.
SOURCE: Sales & Marketing Management; *1990 Survey of Buying Power.*

gular media vehicle that reaches *all* black consumers in a given market is a very outdated concept," claims Smikle, a point that's dramatically reinforced by a look through the *National Directory of Magazines*, where you'll find more than 180 magazines and newspapers specifically targeted to African-Americans. With all these choices—as well as those offered by general market magazines and newspapers, a slew of urban-oriented radio stations, and various network and cable television stations—marketers looking to reach the black market are presented with a bewildering array of options.

1989 Black Consumer Spending Index (BCSI) for Selected Items

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER HOUSEHOLD	BCSI
Alcoholic beverages	$157	84
Cereals & bakery products	265	112
Dairy products	194	95
Food	2,919	107
Food away from home	1,012	87
Fruits & vegetables	322	120
Meats, poultry, fish & eggs	651	162
Nonalcoholic beverages	148	104
Other food at home	476	102
Sugar & other sweets	72	127
Drugs	139	88
Personal care products & svcs.	321	133
Tobacco products & smoking supplies	228	132
Electricity	666	137
Natural gas	312	192
Owned dwellings	1,370	73
Rented dwellings	1,969	199
Telephone	603	161
Utilities, fuels & public svcs.	1,794	148
Household furnishings & equip.	581	81
Housekeeping supplies	234	90
Laundry & cleaning supplies	92	130
Major appliances	118	121
Small appliances & misc. housewares	30	70
Apparel	1,269	122
Footwear	174	140
Infant's apparel (children under 2)	68	143
Men's & boys' apparel	246	94
Women's & girls' apparel	557	129
Cars & trucks, new	485	60
Cars & trucks, used	730	105
Gasoline & motor oil	641	99
Public transportation	224	120
Vehicle purchases	1,215	80
Health care	719	77
Health insurance	322	91
Life & other personal insurance	298	131
Medical services	227	63
Entertainment	585	62
TV, radios & sound equip.	332	117

Notes: The BCSI shows, relative to the population as a whole, how much more (or less) likely black households are to purchase particular items. Per-household expenditures for the general population equal 100 on the BCSI scale. Using this formula, we find that black households are 62% more likely to spend their money on Meat, Poultry, Fish & Eggs than households in general or 13% less likely to purchase Food Away from Home.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics; *1989 Consumer Expenditure Survey*, "Housing Tenure, Race of Reference Person, and Type of Area."
Index figures calculated by *Sales & Marketing Management*.

CHOOSING YOUR MEDIUM

If, for example, you're selling upscale products such as foreign cars, you might want to advertise in *Emerge*, a general-interest magazine designed specifically for educated, professional African-Americans with median household incomes of over $60,000 (*Emerge* has a subscriber base of over 63,000). Or, if apparel and footwear are your game, you may want to check out *Urban Profile*, which targets African-Americans aged 18 to 34 who are primarily enrolled in black colleges.

Also, you should be aware that blacks tune in to more radio stations than *any other* group, and since many black-oriented stations are woven into the social and cultural fabric of their communities, they tend to attract large and loyal listening audiences that cut across virtually every age and income category.

Still, this isn't to say that you should target only the major black station in a given market, since according to Smikle, "We're noticing for the first time that what used to be a monolithic black radio format in major metros is being split—now there's jazz, black adult contemporary, and rap or dance—each targeted to specific demographic and psychographic groups."

In addition, promotions that are integrated into the lifestyle of the black community—through radio or other media—are effective for *any* black segment and can be prepared differently, depending on the product you're endorsing and the income or age segment you're trying to reach.

For example, when trying to reach a broad-based group of black families, Winston-Salem, N.C.-based Segmented Marketing Services Inc. came up with something it called the Church Family Network Gift Bag promotion.

Here's how the SMSi program works: Since churchgoers, as a rule, tend to be older, more educated, and wealthier than the general African-American population, they were singled out as an ideal target group for a twice-a-year distribution of corporate sampling gift bags. The bags were sent to over 7,000 predominately black churches in 16 key markets throughout the nation, including New York, Chicago, and Detroit.

The bags, which contained product samples from packaged goods companies such as Procter & Gamble and Beecham Cosmetics, were then distributed to the churchgoers—or, as Sandra Miller Jones, president of SMSi, puts it, "into the hands of half

the black households in any given city."

This type of promotion is effective, says Pepper Miller of P. Hunter & Assoc., mainly because churches are one of "the only pure elements in the black tradition without a lot of interference from the white world."

Yet another way of reaching a large segment of the black population is through television—in fact, industry studies show that blacks watch 44% more television than whites. As far as what they watch, according to the Impact Resources report, black consumers show a preference for networks such as NBC and, more specifically, Fox, which has actively targeted the younger viewer. As for cable viewing, ESPN, CNN, and BET (the Black Entertainment Network, which offers a full range of black entertainment and information) are the top choices.

And getting back to publications, there are certain general-interest news magazines—such as Johnson Publishing's *Jet* and *Ebony*, both boasting audiences of over eight million readers with median household incomes of $22,468 and $19,638, respectively—that cater to a large segment of the black population. Also, some mass-market magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Bride's*, and *People*, tend to have above-average black readership and should be kept in mind when preparing a broad-based campaign.

Still, while some general-interest magazines and TV shows obviously pull a large share of the African-American audience simply because their numbers are so large, most experts say it's more effective to reach this audience via their own black-oriented media.

According to Lafayette Jones, executive vice president of SMSi, "While reach is important when targeting the black market, advertising has a greater amount of effectiveness when it's showcased in a black media vehicle."

Another type of marketing that works well with the general population but doesn't make the crossover as successfully to African-Americans is direct mail. On the other hand, outdoor advertising tends to be extremely effective—most likely since it targets a specific message to an entire *neighborhood*, playing off the sense of community that's a high priority among blacks.

All in all, no matter how marketers go about it, one thing's for sure: When targeting a specific ethnic market—especially today's African-Americans—understanding the market, its dynamics, and its diversity is the key to reaching it successfully.

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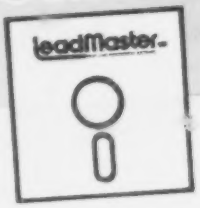

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